ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 13

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:
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SYNOPSIS

Requires mandatory posting of legislation with 41 or more sponsors; provides for Special Order Speeches and public comment periods at committee meetings.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.

AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION amending General Assembly Rules 4:7 and 10:23 and adding Rules 2:10 and 10:26.

BE IT RESOLVED *by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Rule 4:7 is amended to read as follows:

4:7. Calendar of Bills and Resolutions, Consent List.

a. The Speaker shall prepare a Calendar of Bills and Resolutions for consideration subject to the provisions of Rule 15:5. The Speaker may include as part of the Calendar of Bills and Resolutions a consent list consisting of bills and resolutions which the Majority and Minority Leaders have jointly identified as not requiring debate.

b. When a bill or resolution has 41 or more sponsors, the Speaker shall include that bill or resolution on the Calendar of Bills and Resolutions not later than the second meeting of the General Assembly, at which bills and resolutions are considered, after the bill or resolution has received second reading or added its 41st sponsor, whichever is later.

2. Rule 10:23 is amended to read as follows:

10:23. Relieve Committee of a Bill or Resolution.

a. Any motion to relieve a reference committee of a bill or resolution shall only be made by the prime sponsor of the bill or resolution or in the case of a Senate bill or resolution, a member acting on behalf of the prime sponsor of the bills or resolution. The motion to relieve shall not be in order unless twenty-four hours' notice is given the General Assembly of the introduction of the motion and the reference committee has met at least three times since the bill or resolution was referred to the committee.

b. When the motion is moved, debate shall be limited to whether or not the reference committee has given the bill or resolution fair and reasonable consideration. The prime sponsor, in the case of an Assembly bill or resolution, or a member acting on behalf of the prime sponsor of a Senate bill or resolution, shall be entitled to speak first on the motion. The chair of the reference committee, or designee, shall be entitled to speak next in response.

c. A motion to lay the motion to relieve a reference committee of a bill or resolution on the table shall not be in order until the parties, as set forth in subsection b., have been given the opportunity to comment or respond.

d. The motion to relieve a reference committee of a bill or resolution shall not prevail unless it receives at least 41 affirmative votes.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

e. No motion to relieve a reference committee of a bill or resolution may be offered on more than two occasions for any bill or resolution during an annual session

f. When a bill or resolution has 41 or more sponsors and the committee to which it was referred, on initial or subsequent references, has met three times since referral, while having 41 or more sponsors, without reporting the bill or resolution, a prime sponsor of the bill or resolution may so advise the Speaker in writing and upon receipt and verification of that advice, the committee shall be deemed relieved of the bill or resolution and the Speaker shall order the bill or resolution to second reading no later than the next meeting of the General Assembly when a quorum is present.

The bill or resolution shall not be recommitted except pursuant to Rule 10:18 or by the vote of 41 or more members.

3. Rule 2:10 is added as follows:

2:10. (New) Special Order Speeches.

Four times a year, the Speaker, by special order, shall open the floor to special order speeches by members after the General Assembly has concluded its voting, but while the voting board remains open for routine business.

The majority and minority parties shall each have up to one hour for special order speeches. The Speaker shall determine the order of the speeches. No speech shall exceed 15 minutes. The Speaker shall reasonably accommodate independent members wishing to make a special order speech.

Special order speeches shall be broadcast via Internet on the website of the New Jersey Legislature. Technical difficulties with the broadcast shall not unreasonably delay or cause the cancellation of special order speeches.

4. Rule 10:26 is added as follows:

10:26. (New) Committee Public Comments.

Two times a year, each standing reference committee shall schedule at least two hours for public comments on any matters within the subject matter jurisdiction of the committee. The committee chair, vice-chair or acting chair may set reasonable requirements for these comments, and determine all questions that arise in the course of the comments, including ruling members of the public out of order. A member of the public ruled out of order shall forfeit any remaining time for comments. Comments shall be confined to subjects within the jurisdiction of the committee and shall avoid personalities. Public comments may address particular bills or resolutions referred to the committee. No member of the public shall speak longer than five minutes and shall promptly conclude remarks upon being advised that time is expired.

The public comments shall be broadcast via Internet on the website of the New Jersey Legislature. Technical difficulties with the broadcast shall not unreasonably delay or cause the cancellation of public comments.

5. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

Section 1 amends Rule 4:7 and requires the Speaker to include on the Calendar of Bills and Resolutions any bill or resolution with 41 or more sponsors no later than the second meeting of the General Assembly, at which bills and resolutions are considered, after the bill or resolution receives second reading or adds its 41st sponsor, whichever is later. This provision applies only to bills or resolutions with 41 or more current sponsors.

Section 2 adds subsection f. to Rule 10:23. Subsection f. would require that when a bill or resolution has 41 or more sponsors and is referred to a committee, if the committee does not report the bill by the third meeting of that committee after referral, a prime sponsor may so advise the Speaker in writing. The Speaker shall verify that advice and not later than the next meeting of the General Assembly, when a quorum is present, order the bill or resolution to second reading. Because the purpose of subsection f. is to expedite the consideration of bills and resolutions with 41 or more sponsors, the bill or resolution may only receive a second or subsequent committee reference under Rule 10:18 or by the vote of 41 or more members.

Section 3 adds a new Rule 2:10 on special order speeches. Special order speeches would be scheduled four times a year and take place after the General Assembly has concluded its voting and while the voting board remains open for routine business. The majority and minority parties would each have up to one hour for special order speeches. Each member speaking would have up to 15 minutes. The Speaker shall reasonably accommodate special order speeches by independent members. As the General Assembly remains in session during these speeches, they are subject to all rules of the General Assembly and also the "speech or debate" provisions of Article IV, Section IV, paragraph 9 of the New Jersey Constitution.

Section 4 adds a new Rule 10:26 regarding comments by members of the public before standing reference committees. Two times a year, each standing reference committee must schedule two hours for public comments. The committee member presiding during these comments shall resolve all issues that arise and ensure that proper decorum is followed at all times. Public comments shall not deal with personalities and must be confined to subjects within the jurisdiction of the committee.